

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-7, 9, and 11-19 are now pending. Applicant has amended claims 1 and 17, added new claims 18 and 19, and cancelled claims 8 and 10 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Request for Initialed PTO-1449 Forms

Applicant again notes that no acknowledgement has been received for the Information Disclosure Statements filed on October 5, 2000 and October 16, 2003. Accordingly, copies of the PTO-1449 Forms that have not been acknowledged are attached hereto. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner return the initialed forms to confirm that the cited documents have been considered.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 2, 3, 6, 7, and 13 are allowed and that claims 4, 10, and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims. In this reply, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable claim 10 and intervening claim 8. Independent claim 17 has been similarly amended. Furthermore, new independent claim 18 corresponds to claim 4 rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of claim 1. Furthermore, new independent claim 19 corresponds to a combination of claim 17 and allowable dependent claim 4. In view of these amendments, Applicant believes the application is in clear condition for allowance.

Prior Art Rejections

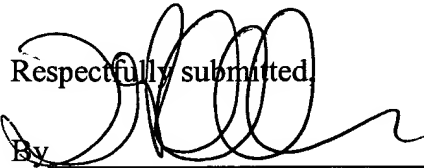
Applicant respectfully submits that the prior art rejections set forth on pages 2-4 of the Office Action have been rendered moot by the claim amendments presented herein, which incorporate allowable subject matter into the rejected independent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that these rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact D. Richard Anderson Reg. No. 40,439 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: December 20, 2006

Respectfully submitted,


By _____
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